

## Carlos

It is pretty exciting being in a new school isn't it? Our last location was okay, but this one offers us so much more.

The principal here is such a loving person. He is letting us use extra rooms, have extra storage, and work with us in about any way he can.

Now, he doesn't know me, he doesn't know our church. But yet, he has gone out of his way to help us. I asked him why he was being so kind to us. His response, "We might need your help someday. I know you would help us out if we needed it."

"I know you would help us out if we needed it" Hmm... I wonder, would we?

Our scripture lessons for today are ones that we have talked about before. Typically I don't like to use the same scripture within the same year, but today I felt compelled to use them again for a couple of different reasons.

Let's look at those scriptures - First of all, someone asked Jesus what we have to do to inherit everlasting life – and the response was to love the lord your God and love your neighbor.

For many people, when they think about loving their neighbor, they think about the guy who borrowed your hammer, or the lady that kept your casserole dish.

It is easy to walk out our front doors and see who our neighbors are. That is who most people think of when they think of neighbors. Sure, it could be easy enough to care about these people who live right around us.

After all, they look like us, pretty much dress like us, for the most part act like us – okay, I guess we can care about them. If I hear that one of them is sick, I will send a card or maybe even take them dinner.

But is this what Jesus was talking about? A get well card and meatloaf? While those things are good, and they do have their place, I think Jesus wants us to strive for a different kind of love.

In our second scripture, Jim read for us a parable, which is a story Jesus used to get his point across. In this parable, Jesus tells us of a man that was mugged and was left lying on the ground bleeding.

Now two important church people walked by, one was the lay leader and the other was the pastor. It was a busy day for them, going up to the church – they couldn't get their clothes dirty – and back in those days, if you touched someone that was bleeding, you would be considered unclean until that night – which meant they wouldn't be allowed to go into the temple.

So, it is much better to let that person bleed to death than to not go to church. They were probably thinking that they have to get to church and commune with God. They can't be delayed because this dying person needs help. Let someone else worry about it.

Then in the parable, it talks about how a Samaritan person came up to the man that was mugged and gave him help. It is hard for us to relate to what a Samaritan is in today's world – but let's just say they were a community living close to where the Jews lived – and the Samaritans and Jews did not like each other at all. So a Samaritan would be that last person you would expect to stop and help a Jew.

Then Jesus asked, who was more of a neighbor to that person. Now the Priest and the Levite – or the Pastor and the Lay Person – lived close to the man that was mugged, but totally ignored him.

The Samaritan didn't live close, his people weren't even liked by the Jews, but he stopped and helped anyway. Jesus tells us that this man was more of a neighbor.

This is a nice story right? Things like this don't happen in real life, do they?

Well, maybe not to this extreme, but let me share a real life story with you.

Friday evening Shirley and I were driving home after dinner when we saw a stopped car on the right hand side, about 15 people standing around with cell phones pressed against their heads and a man lying on the ground surrounded by blood.

There wasn't an ambulance there yet and I hadn't heard any sirens so I knew it would be a few minutes until an ambulance arrived.

Now there were a lot of people there already, there wasn't any need to stop was there? Well, for me, there still was a need. About 12 years ago I was a Paramedic – I thought that I may be able to help so we stopped.

Out of all the people standing around, two people were actually trying to help this man that appeared to have been hit by a car. His name is Carlos.

I didn't really provide much help, and I don't want to focus on anything I did – because I am trained. I want to focus on the two people that were trying to calm Carlos down. These two people were applying direct pressure to his head where he was bleeding, and applying direct pressure to his arm that was bleeding really bad as well.

These people weren't off duty professionals. These people weren't trained in first aid. These people weren't friends of Carlos. These people were different from Carlos and Carlos was different from them.

But these people were neighbors to Carlos. They saw another human being that could have been dying and needed their help.

Now we all have our gifts and talents. Some people there stopped and were available if needed, some people called 911, others were standing around handing out towels to help stop the bleeding.

I am not saying that we all should stop or would even be able to stop at an accident like this. But no matter what are talents are, we need to ask ourselves - if nobody else was around, would we have stopped?

Out of all of the people that stopped to help, I want to focus on the female that stopped to give aid. Her name is Beth. She was the one that was giving direct pressure to Carlos' head to stop the bleeding.

Carlos was getting a little agitated at being on the ground and was trying to get up. This could have been very bad for him. So Beth continued to hold pressure on his head and held him close. She comforted him and reassured him. And her reward for this? She got covered in blood.

She didn't know Carlos. But did that stop her from ruining her clothes? No at all. Could Carlos have Aids or Hepatitis? Maybe. Did it go through her mind? Possibly. Did it stop her from loving her neighbor? No.

There were no cameras there, nobody handing out medals that say "hero", probably not even a "thank you". But she did it none-the-less because it was the right thing to do.

This kind of love is called sacrificial love. Giving of yourself in a sacrificial way. She could have risked her life and she would most definitely have to throw her clothes away. But that did not stop her from helping this man that desperately needed her help.

It isn't easy for us to give of ourselves in a sacrificial way. And I am not saying that everyone should stop at a car accident. But what I am saying is that we should ask ourselves what we would sacrifice for our family, our friends, our loved ones, our church, our community, a complete stranger.

Again, we need to ask ourselves this question, If we saw Carlos laying on the side of the road by himself, what would we do? Now, if you were Carlos laying by the side of the road, and you saw us driving by, what would you want us to do?

In not such a profound way, the principal here did the same for us. He took good care of us knowing that we may never do anything in return for him. But he took that chance and sacrificed a little extra income for the school and he even sacrificed much needed storage space so we could have extra. He sacrificially gave to us.

There was another sacrifice done for us, about 2,000 years ago. Jesus sacrificed himself for us because we needed help. Humanity itself was laying on the side of the road and needed help. Without His sacrifice, we would have no hope. Without his sacrifice, there wouldn't be anything for us to look forward to. Without his sacrifice, we would be lost.

Christ asks for something in return, he asks us to love him and love our neighbor. Now he died, knowing that some of us would turn our backs on him, but none the less, he died for us anyway.

That my friends, is a true sacrifice.

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